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Perkins - Remarks - 1841

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FROM

Gorham Parks

REMARKS

BY

HON. T. H. PERKINS

AT

LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE

THE BOSTON EXCHANGE,

AUGUST 2, 1841

BOSTON

WILLIAM CARRUTHERS, PRINTER, NO. 22 WASHINGTON STREET.

1841



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R E M A R K S

MADE BY THE

H O N. T. H. P E R K I N S

AT THE

L A Y I N G O F T H E C O R N E R S T O N E

O F

T H E B O S T O N E X C H A N G E ,

AUGUST 2, 1841.

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BOSTON :

PRINTED BY SAMUEL N. DICKINSON, NO. 52 WASHINGTON STREET.

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1841.

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1854 June 28
Autogr. Graham Parks
of class 1854

INTRODUCTION.

At a special meeting of the Directors of the Boston Exchange Company, held on the 23d July, 1841, it was voted that the Building Committee be authorized to make such arrangements, as they may think proper, in reference to laying the Corner-stone of the building of the "*Boston Exchange Company*," on State street, and to deposite a plate with suitable inscriptions.

The following is a copy of a letter addressed to the Hon. Thomas H. Perkins, by the Building Committee.

SIR: The undersigned being appointed by the Directors of the Boston Exchange Company, to superintend the building of the Exchange on State street, consider it appropriate that, as the edifice is intended for the accommodation of Merchants, the corner-stone of it should be laid by some one of their own profession.

Convinced that it will be highly gratifying to their fellow-citizens that a gentleman should be selected for the purpose, who has long and honorably sustained the position of *head* of the mercantile community of Boston, the Committee request that you will do the Company the honor to perform this ceremony on Monday, the 2d day of August next, at 9 o'clock, A. M.

A. E. BELKNAP, SAMUEL HENSHAW, THOMAS LAMB, THADDEUS NICHOLS, JR., ISAAC LIVERMORE,	}	<i>Building Committee.</i>
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To the HON. THOMAS H. PERKINS.

Boston, July 27, 1841.

Col. Perkins having given his consent to act upon the occasion, a large number of persons assembled to witness the ceremony. At the conclusion of the Address delivered by him, a silver plate, with an inscription engraved on it, was placed in a leaden box, together with one or more of each of the American coins now in circulation ; also, a " pine tree shilling," bearing date 1652, which was presented by Isaac P. Davis, Esq. In the box were also deposited copies of the Massachusetts Register, the Boston Directory, and the Boston Almanac for 1841 ; a list of the original subscribers to the Company, and a copy of each of the newspapers of the day.

The box, having been carefully soldered and hermetically closed, was deposited in a cavity cut in the corner-stone or plinth, covered with marble, and secured with cement. The base of the ante, which is to form the northeast corner of the building, was then placed over it.

The Directors, after the ceremonies were completed, met, and it was unanimously voted, that the thanks of the Directors of the Boston Exchange Company be presented to the Hon. Thomas H. Perkins, for his services this day rendered in laying the corner-stone of the Exchange, and that he be respectfully requested to furnish the Directors with a copy of the highly interesting remarks made by him on that occasion. The following is a copy of the answer of Col. Perkins.

TO THE DIRECTORS OF THE BOSTON EXCHANGE COMPANY :

GENTLEMEN : I have received your letter expressing a desire that you should be furnished with a copy of the remarks made by me, at the laying of the corner-stone of the Exchange, now in the course of building. As I told you, I left my notes on my table at this place, from inadvertence, or I should probably have inflicted a longer talk upon you than I did. Enclosed are the reminiscences to which I alluded, or intended to allude.

I am aware that in my remarks, I am obnoxious to the charge of egotism ; but that grows out of the occasion. My remarks being made from memory, and having consulted no other record on the subject, it is very probable I may have misstated facts in some cases. If so, it was not intentional, and must be charged to the time which has elapsed, since the record was made on the tablet of my memory. Indeed, in the *Atlas* of Wednesday, I am charged with an error, as to the first ship that Capt. Scott commanded in the London trade, which the writer says was the *Neptune*, and which I have no doubt is correct. I have however some question as to whether the *Minerva*, the second ship commanded by Scott, was built in *New York*, as the writer says she was ; Boston, at that period, being much more of a ship-building place than New York. Still he may be correct. In putting down upon paper my recollections, from my notes, they have grown upon me ; and I leave you at liberty to use the scissors freely upon them, or commit them to the flames, at your pleasure.

As I have "set down nought in malice," I hope those whose eye they may meet, will not criticise them too severely. — I am, Gentlemen, with my wishes for the success of your undertaking,

Your Obedient Servant,

T. H. PERKINS.

Brookline, Aug. 6th, 1841.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE INSCRIPTION ON THE SILVER PLATE:

BOSTON, MDCCCXLI.

*The Corner Stone of the edifice intended for an Exchange, and for the accommodation of Merchants, erected by the **Boston Exchange Company**, was laid on the second day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-one, by*
THOMAS HANDASYDE PERKINS, *Merchant,*
The Boston Exchange Company being represented by

ROBERT G. SHAW, *President,*

Philo S. Shelton,	}	<i>Directors.</i>	John Lamson,
James H. Mills,			Isaac Livermore,
William P. Winchester,			Thaddeus Nichols, Jr.
Enoch Train,			William Parsons,
Samuel Henshaw,			Andrew E. Belknap,
John D. Bates,			Thomas Lamb.

Samuel Dana, *Treasurer,*

Edward Blake, *Clerk.*

<i>Andrew E. Belknap,</i>	}	<i>Building Committee.</i>
<i>Samuel Henshaw,</i>		
<i>Isaac Livermore,</i>		
<i>Thaddeus Nichols, Jr.</i>		
<i>Thomas Lamb,</i>		

ISAIAH ROGERS, *Architect.*

John Tyler being President of the United States of America.
John Davis, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
Jonathan Chapman, Mayor of the City of Boston.

MAY GOD PROSPER THE UNDERTAKING!

REMINISCENCES.

ALMOST an *octogenaire*, and 'having lived in this street from infancy to manhood, I may be presumed to be familiar with what it was *sixty years since*. My mercantile education was in a counting-house in this street, on the site of the store of Mr. May, at the corner of what is now Broad street ; and the residence of my parents was in the house owned by Mr. Tappan, opposite Kilby street. This location, therefore, being my play-ground, as well as my school-ground, circumstances made me more familiar with it, than with any other part of the town.

The venerable building before us, at the head of the street, was then called the *Town House* ; afterwards the State House ; and since, until very lately, the City Hall. This building has undergone no change in its exterior dimensions, but in its appropriations, the changes have been great indeed. The lower floor, now occupied by the Post Office, was then without any partitions, except, I think, for two small offices, one of which was a notary's, and the other had some connexion with

the Legislature, which, at its annual session, met on the second story. The Senate Chamber was at the east end, and the House of Representatives at the west end, of the same floor.

The lower floor, with the exceptions mentioned, was a promenade for those who chose to use it; but it was more occupied by the little urchins of the day, in top-spinning and marble-playing, than by their seniors for any purpose. In these scenes, I well remember to have taken a part there. The entrance to the first floor, was by a set of wide stone steps, flanked by a handsome wrought-iron balustrade. There was also a stone platform on a level with the entrance, and over it, a balcony leading out of the Senate Chamber. From this balcony, I first heard read to a great number of perons called together by the occasion, the *Declaration of Independence*. The then sheriff, Joseph Henderson, read the Instrument, which was followed by the huzzas of the thousands present. This must have been in July 1776, soon after the Declaration by Congress; and is as fresh in my mind as if it had happened yesterday. The *cellar*, under the lower floor, where the News Room and other offices now are, was occupied for fuel only, except at the northeast corner, where was the *Watch House* — in front of it, the *Stocks*; and hard by, in the open street, the *Whipping Post*, where, on Thursdays, the degrading punishment of whipping on the bare back, not only male, but female delinquents, was often publicly exhibited. The *Pillory* was also

sometimes used in those days ; and when used, stood in the middle of this street, between Quaker lane, now Congress street, and Royal Exchange lane, now Exchange street. Until after the British troops evacuated the town, this street was called *King* street ; but soon after the King's troops departed, it took the name it now bears, of State street. The Lion and the Unicorn, with some other emblems of royalty, used to figure where are now the scrolls on the front of the building.

Sixty years ago, the street was of the same width as at present, but how changed in every other respect ! At that period, it was paved quite across from house to house—there was no side-walk or *trottoir* in the street, nor, I believe, in the town. A gutter, at about the same distance from the houses as the curb-stone is now, marked the bounds intended for pedestrians. Before some of the houses were flag-stones, placed there by the owners at their own expense ; but there was no continuous accommodation of this sort. All the houses above Merchants' row on the north, and Kilby street on the south, were used as family dwellings, up to what was then called the *Main street*, now Washington street. Below those streets, with a few exceptions, were stores occupied by some of the most eminent merchants in the United States. Thomas Russell, John Coffin Jones, and James Bowdoin, afterwards Lieut. Governor, occupied the three stores which still remain as

they were at that time, resembling the "*Last of the Mohegans*." It is to be hoped they may soon be made more in keeping with the modern structures in the street. All the other buildings, then chiefly of wood, a few of brick, have either given place to new granite and brick edifices, or have been so changed in appearance by adding to, and beautifying them, that the builders would not know the work of their own hands. The most of them are rebuilt entirely.

In 1780 there were four Insurance Offices in this street, and they were the only ones in the town. They were not incorporated. The earliest that I remember, was kept by Edward Payne, in the next building before you, now occupied by the Fire and Marine Insurance Office. He was the father of the late Mrs. Gore, (the wife of the lamented Gov. Gore,) and of our late townsman, William Payne. Mr. Payne (the father) was wounded whilst standing at his door, on the night of the 5th March, 1770, by a ball from the fire of *Preston's Regulars*; in the affair, which, from the number of persons killed and wounded, was called the "*Bloody Massacre*." The front room was the Insurance Office; the other parts of the house were occupied by his family. A second office was kept by Mr. Hurd, at the corner of the building, now the New England Bank, then the "Bunch of Grapes" tavern. Hon. P. C. Brooks succeeded Col. Hurd, and N. P. Russell, Esq. was in the office as successor to Mr. Brooks, until the

incorporated offices were established. A third was kept by Moses Michael Hays, of facetious memory, on the lower floor of a building, where the Boston Insurance Office now is, then occupied by a Mrs. Gray as a boarding-house. The Office was at the corner of the alley, then, by the sailors, called *Damnation alley*, but by others, Hickling's alley. It has since changed its name again, and is now known as Flagg alley, from being laid with flat stones. The fourth was next to Mr. Payne's, and kept by Mr. Edward Davis. It was the habit of those days, for merchants and retired capitalists to meet at these offices, to subscribe policies offered them by the office keeper. They were in the habit of taking from £50 to £100 lawful money, of six shillings in the dollar, or those who were *very* adventurous may have taken as much as £200. Business, politics, and *gossip*, were the order of the day at these meetings.

When the incorporated offices were subsequently established, the directors, who were generally active merchants, with retired merchants who were stockholders, continued the habit of congregating in them; not to subscribe policies, but to advise the President as to issuing them, and probably to do as their precursors had done, in *other particulars*.* This habit may account for the long delay in building an Exchange, which is called for particularly, by the great increase of strangers

* There are now twenty-four offices for insurance, with a capital of between six and seven millions of dollars.

who visit the city, as well as by the great amount of business now transacted, compared with that of *sixty years since*. From the plan and elevation of the building now exhibited to us, and a knowledge of the material of which it is to be built, we may venture to predict that it will do honor to all concerned in promoting its erection.

The first bank incorporated in this town was the Massachusetts Bank, with a capital of £500,000: it was not originally located in State street, but at the *Factory*, as it was called, now Hamilton place. The first President was James Bowdoin, who held the office for two years, and was succeeded by William Phillips, whose son and grandson have filled the same office since. Samuel Osgood was the first cashier, but remained in office only six months. Peter Roe Dalton, the second cashier, remained to exercise that office until 1792, when he filled the same post in the Branch Bank of the United States, with much credit to himself and benefit to the bank, until the expiration of the first charter. The second bank incorporated was the Union Bank, now at the corner of the street opposite. The others followed at long intervals. There are at this time, I believe, twenty-five banks in the city, with a capital of above seventeen millions of dollars, nearly all located in this street.

Since my recollection, there were four public houses in State street, where banks or insurance offices now stand. The oldest was the *Admiral Vernon*, at the lower

corner of Merchant's row ; the *Bunch of Grapes* was kept by Col. Marston, at the corner of Kilby street ; the *Coffee House*, by Deacon Jones, on the site now occupied by the Massachusetts Bank ; and the fourth, at the corner of Royal Exchange lane, was then called the *Exchange*, and was kept by Mr. Gray. My recollection of the last-mentioned tavern is the more vivid, from having been taken there when a child, to see the corpse of one of the persons killed at the massacre in 1770.

The first custom house established in Boston under this Government, was in the house adjoining your proposed Exchange. I think the lower part of the house was occupied as a boarding-house, kept by a person named Coburn. The Revolutionary Gen. Lincoln was the first Collector, appointed by President Washington, and held the office until after the election of President Jefferson, when he resigned. From its first location, the Custom House was removed to the chambers of Mrs. Gray's boarding-house, opposite, before spoken of, where it remained until removed to its present location in Custom-house street. The next remove will be to the splendid granite building at the bottom of the street, which, when completed, will be second to no custom house in this, or any other country.

The wharf, at the foot of the street, is now, and was sixty years since, appropriately called the *Long Wharf*. Of the time when it was erected, I am not

aware ; but, in my youth, I remember it as an old, and not a very good wharf. At my first recollection of it, during the war of the Revolution, it was in a dilapidated state, the water passing nearly over its lower end. It was then a cob-wharf, built on cross timbers, the tide ebbing and flowing under the stores ; and of course all the stores were without cellars. At a subsequent period, the water was boxed out, and the accommodation of cellars furnished to most of them. The stores were all of wood, mostly but two stories high. On the north side there was a passage, but for foot-passengers only, and that a very bad one. The wharf was little more than one half its present width, nor was it so long as it now is. There were but three or four stores upon it below the projecting part, now owned by Messrs. Brimmer, formerly called *Minot's T*, and still known as the T wharf, from having the form of that letter. Since that time it has greatly changed its appearance.

The principal wharves, sixty years since, were, on the *south* side of the Long wharf, Rowe's wharf, Wheelwright's, now Foster's wharf, Fort-Hill wharf, Griffin's, now Liverpool wharf, (made historical from the fact that the tea ships, which were unloaded into the sea, lay there,) Gray's, since known by the name of Russell's, and now Russia wharf, Tileston's, and, the last on that side of the town, Hatch's wharf, near the entrance to Sea street. On the *north* side of the Long wharf, were Hancock's wharf, Ver-

non's, now Union wharf, and North Battery wharf, afterwards owned and occupied by the late Theodore Lyman. There were many short wharves, on either side of the Long wharf, used for landing fuel, in the form of wood, (no coal being then used but by blacksmiths,) lumber, salt, fish, &c. Many of the docks, belonging to these smaller wharves, have been filled up, and in their stead are erected whole streets of substantial brick and stone buildings. India wharf and Central wharf, on the south, and Commercial and Lewis' wharf, and the City wharf, all on the north of Long wharf, with the extension of many wharves not named, and many new creations, now furnish better wharf accommodation than even the great emporium, New York, or any other city in the Union, can boast.

In connexion with the commercial accommodation, I may be permitted to speak of the *commerce* of the *town* at that early day. During the war, foreign trade was very limited, and continued so for a considerable time after the peace of 1783. Soon after the war ceased, a line of packets was first established between this place and London. Capt. Scott, in the *Minerva*, commanded the first of them, and our late fellow-citizen, Capt. Tristram Barnard, commanded the other. Each made *two trips* a year, and generally brought news of fifty or sixty day's date! Look at this, and compare it with the almost daily arrivals from Europe, and the almost certain receipt of news, by the Cunard line, every twelve or fifteen days!

The first ship that doubled the Cape of Good Hope, from this port, was built at Clark's ship yard, at the north part of the town, and was commanded by Capt. James Magee, the elder. The name of the ship I do not remember. I think she belonged, mainly, to Sears & Smith, who had removed to this town, after it was evacuated by the British troops. The senior of the firm went to China in her. He died at Canton, and his remains now rest at French Island, in the river of Canton.

The first vessels which sailed round *Cape Horn*, from Boston, were the *Columbia*, Capt. Kendrick, and *Washington*, Capt. Gray, as a tender to the *Columbia*. They were fitted out by the late Mr. Joseph Barrell, and were owned in shares by him and Mr. Samuel Brown, Messrs. Hatch, Hopkins, Dr. Bulfinch, and others. Mr. Barrell and Mr. Brown had, I believe, the credit of the enterprise, to which they were probably incited, by the information gathered from the voyage of the celebrated navigator, Cook, who went from the Northwest coast of America to China, and carried down the information of the abundance of sea-otter on the coast, and of their great value in China. The voyage, from mis-management abroad, was not as profitable as the enterprise merited. Capt. Kendrick took the command of the *Washington* at sea, and transferred Capt. Gray to the *Columbia*, who, whilst he commanded her, entered the river, to which he gave the name of his ship, doubtless the first vessel, larger than a canoe, that

had ever crossed the bar of that interesting river. Capt. Gray proceeded thence to Canton, where I saw him in 1789. What the trade from Boston has been, beyond either Cape, since that period, I need not refer to.

Sixty years ago, this Peninsula, of which the Indian name was Shawmut, contained from six to eight hundred acres of land. Since that date, by encroachments upon the harbor, and by the acquisition of South and East Boston, the quantity of land in the City territory has become not less than eighteen hundred acres; it being computed that the *made* land exceeds a fourth of the original quantity. At that time, the inhabitants of the town were between seventeen and eighteen thousand. They are now, by the recent census, more than five times that number, — and the addition to the wealth of the population I will not venture to compute, any more than the difference of tonnage that came to our wharves at that period and the present.

One of the most interesting additions to the town, within sixty years, has been in the churches. There were then but sixteen places of public worship. Three were Episcopalian, twelve Congregationalist and Baptist, and there was one Quaker meeting house. This last was in Quaker lane, (now Congress street,) and was located where the granite shops now are, on the west side of the street. Of the above, the only buildings which remain as they were at that period are, the King's chapel, the North Episcopal church, the church in Brattle street, Dr. Lothrop's

at the North End, — perhaps one or two more. All the rest, except Croswell's in School street, (formerly occupied by a Huguenot society,) and the Quaker meeting house, have been rebuilt on the foundations of the old buildings, and, with the new ones added, make the number of places of public worship within the city at this time, upwards of seventy. Mr. Croswell's meeting house in School street, and that in Quaker lane, have disappeared.

Sixty years since, the only road leading into the town was the ancient highway from Roxbury, by the isthmus, then called the *Neck*, now Washington street. On the Neck, from the present site of the South Bridge to the Boston line, more than a mile, there were but *three*, or at most, *four* houses. These were on the west side; on the east there were none. From the site of the South Bridge to about the site of the Gasometer was a sea-wall, covered with flat stones, to keep off the sea, and protect pedestrians from a wet foot, in high tides. The *Neck* was paved in the centre only, and on each side of this pavement was left a summer road. During the Mayoralty of Josiah Quincy, the whole avenue was paved, and now shows almost a continuous line of houses. There are parallel to it three wide streets, on land which was then marsh, if not flowed by the sea; and there are seven bridges, and four rail roads, leading into the city, and two steamboat ferries. Charlestown bridge, opened in 1786, was the first bridge

that was built, connecting the town with its neighbors. The Cambridge, or what was called the West Boston bridge, was the second ; the others followed at some distance.

The principal schools, in the time spoken of, were Proctor's, afterwards Carter's school, on Pemberton's Hill ; Tileston's, in North School street ; Holbrook's, in West street ; Paine's, at the foot of what is now Morton place ; and the Latin school, in School street ; the first master of which, that I knew, was Master Lovell, afterwards Naval Officer of this port, under the present government. There were others, doubtless ; but those were the most prominent. At this moment, the number of schools, and the accommodation they afford, as well as all the *accessories* of learning, are greatly increased, *even in proportion to the number of scholars.*

I might speak of the time, when the *Work House*, the *Alms House*, and the *Bridewell*, (*the last occasionally used for lunatics,*) occupied the space between the houses of Mr. Sawyer at the head, and that of Mr. Dwight near the foot, of Park street. The Park Street Church occupies the location of the old *Grainery*. I might speak, too, of the period, within my recollection, when there was a *Small Pox Hospital* at West Boston, the *only* public Hospital in or near the town, and compare that with the General Hospital, and other eleemosynary establishments, at this time :—of the gaol in Queen street, now Court street, com-

pared with the prison in Leveret street; the last a palace to the former; — of the changes which have taken place in the cemeteries, at the period spoken of almost objects of disgust compared with the same burial places now, ornamented as they are, with iron railings, and decorated with trees and flowering shrubs; — of the Common, which, not sixty years since, was surrounded by a wooden railing, and did not contain all the land it does now, a portion on the south having been added by purchase from the late Wm. Foster, Esq. The only Mall, at that time, was on Tremont street; whereas it now extends round the whole space of about forty acres, and the old wooden rail has given place to an iron fence upon a granite foundation. It is but a few years, too, since cows were permitted to feed in the Common, to the great annoyance as well as danger, of women and children. The *Horse Pond* has been filled up, and is now covered with verdure; and the *Frog Pond*, now called by boys the Quincy Lake, is walled about, and has become a pretty object of ornament, while it affords to them a fine piece of skating surface in winter. Sixty years since showed but *three* houses, which are now visible from the centre of the Common. Those are the Hancock House, the house at the bottom of the Mall on Tremont street, formerly owned by Wm. Powell, and now belonging to the heirs of the late Wm. Foster, and the third, a wooden building opposite the Burying Ground.

To advert to other changes, I well remember the first exhibition of a theatre in this town, which was in

a *barn*, fitted up for the purpose, somewhere between 1785 and 1790. It was located in Board alley, leading from Summer street to Milk street. Placide, Duvilliers, and Mallet, may yet live in the recollection of more than myself; and others who were associated with them as the *dramatis personæ* of the day.

Hackney coaches were first established after the Peace. The first stand for them was at the head of State street, and the late Mr. John Ballard was, I believe, the owner of the first of them. In 1784, there was a daily coach set up between this place and Providence, driven by a Mr. Baister. Starting at an early hour, you arrived at Providence *before night*. Now the work of two hours! The veteran Pease soon after set up the first stage-coach between this place and New York. At the end of the first day the coach reached Shrewsbury, where Mr. Pease kept a tavern; the second day brought it to West Brookfield, or Palmer; and on the *third*, it reached Springfield by dinner-time. The mail between this and Newport was carried at that time on *horse back* in *saddle bags* as *often* as once a week, and the rider was something of a Quixotic looking personage, with a long drab coat, a cocked hat, and a wig. Whether he took up all the week in the journey, I do not know; but that the mail was a weekly one I am pretty sure. Those modes of travelling compared with the present, are as a sloth to a meteor. The other day I tested this by travelling 160 miles, on the Western Rail Road, from Springfield to Chester, back

to Springfield, and thence to Boston, in *ten hours*, and dining on the way at Springfield.

The accommodations for strangers in this city have improved as much as any thing, within a few years. The United States Hotel and Tremont House, afford now more and better accommodation than did all the taverns and boarding houses of the town, taken together, at a date within my memory. The White Horse, the Black Horse, the Lamb Tavern, and the Oliver Cromwell, kept by Bracket, in School street, were the principal public lodging houses, in my early day. The private boarding houses were many, and pretty good ; but furnishing not a twentieth part of the comfort to the wayfarer, which is found in those of the present day.

And lastly, I may call to the recollection of some present, the great difference between the Fire Department, as it now exists, and as it was when administered by a Board of Fire Wards, who officiated at fires, in directing the operations of the engine men and the citizens. At that time, water for the engines was drawn from wells, and conveyed by lines of citizens, in leathern buckets. There were no reservoirs and little or no hose apparatus. When the weather was pleasant, there were plenty of operators, but at other times there was often a scarcity. There were voluntary clubs throughout the town, of thirty, or more, persons in each. The members were obliged, under a forfeiture, to keep two leathern buckets, in each of which they were bound to carry a bag,

made of light canvass ; and both the buckets and bag bore the name of the owner, and of the *Fire Club* to which he belonged. A *bed screw* was required too, by the rules. Upon the cry of fire, the members were enjoined to repair to the spot, and to deliver the buckets for the general use ; they kept the bags, to be filled with valuables at their own discretion. If a member lived in the vicinity of the fire, he was first attended to. The badge of the Fire Wards was a heavy red pole, with a brass blaze at the end. They were chosen at town meeting to serve a year, and they had a right to enforce the labor of persons on the spot ; but seldom were obliged to exercise it. The engine men were generally mechanics, or truckmen, who received no pay, but were excused from officiating as jurymen, and were not liable to be called out on *training days*. They were a gallant set of fellows, and did their duty manfully, though not always successfully, having to contend with wooden houses, and shingled roofs, sometimes a want of water, and sometimes of operators. Under the present admirable arrangement, the advantages, in a variety of particulars, are incalculable, independently of the saving in property. Thanks to a City Government, that has caused the change !

I have omitted to speak of the market houses of former days. The Faneuil Hall lower floor was the only beef market. On what is now the vacant space, about that honored building, stood the stalls, where small meats, poultry, fish, and vegetables, were sold. There were other fish stalls in different parts of the

town, but I have no recollection of any other meat market. Butchers' carts traversed the town ; and such persons as had neither time nor inclination to go to market, were supplied at their own doors. That noble building, the Quincy Market, erected during the Mayoralty of Hon. Josiah Quincy, now President of Harvard University, is the best building that I have ever seen, either in Europe or this country, occupied as a market.

It may be added that sixty years since, the town was principally of wood. Now, almost all the dwelling houses are of brick or stone. Many of the streets were unpaved at that time, and none had regular side-walks. They are now all paved, and have convenient side-walks, of either brick or flat stone. The edifices of a public character, at the close of the war, bore no comparison with those now in use ; and the private dwellings of the present day are at least equal to those of any city in the United States. The poor, too, are better taken care of now, than sixty years since, and constant efforts are making to better their condition.

It is pleasant to have seen such changes as have taken place, to us who have witnessed them ; and perhaps no less pleasant to the younger portion of the community, to hear from their seniors, of the improvement which has constantly followed change.

May the kind Providence which has thus far watched over us, in times of adversity and prosperity, continue to smile upon our native city !



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